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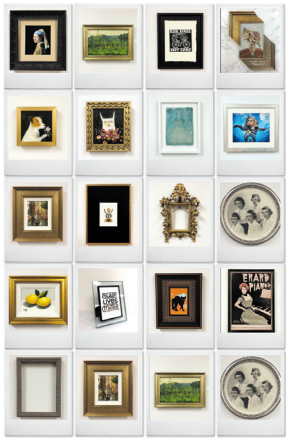

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Love, Set To Music

BY RANDY STERN

"Love is love."

That has been the main mantra for our community's progress of late. It is the very reason why we're here.

The dream of loving someone, making the commitment for making it last forever – it is something we all share. It something that takes many forms, but it is true to its essence.

So many friends have taken the route towards commitment and staying forever true to themselves. We see them on social media on dates, trips, outings, a concert, at home, at the altar…and so forth. "In sickness and in health, 'til death do they part."

We all have our ideas of what love is. The essence of our community is that we all want to live a happy life with the person we care about the most. That is why we fought our fights for the past five decades for the simple want of living a loving lifestyle.

How do you express your love to the fullest?

I know! Music!

C'mon, we all love a good love song, do we?

There's so many. We choose a "wedding

song" that we will do the first dance with. We have that one song that reminds us of our first date. There's that new love song that pops up on your streaming playlist that caught you at the right time.

Love songs come in all genres. A great symphonic piece that invites you to take in the moment. A sugary pop song that is as sweet as your love life. A country tune that encourages you to stay with your love, instead of leaving them. How about an old classic love song from decades gone by?

Love is always set to music. Based on one of our articles in this issue, that music could be pumped – rather, filtered – through some dozen or so finely tuned speakers surrounding you on your way to your wedding, honeymoon, or your special date. Maybe your anniversary?

We offer these issues to affirm something that continues to keep us engaged – your love. Your love life. Your marriage. And, your life together.

Therefore, in this issue, we present you – love. Marriage. Life.

From photographing your love in a sensual fashion to checking out a movie about LGBTQ romance, we have you covered. We even included this issue's couples to inspire you, as well.

So, turn on the love songs! Use it as a soundtrack towards reading this issue. Be inspired. Be loved. ∎

OUR LAVENDER | A WORD IN EDGEWISE

Saving the World? – Just Say "No"

BY E.B. BOATNER

Late one night computer readouts at a Soviet Union early warning bases indicated the United States had already a launched a missile strike. The birds were on the wing. Five of them, to be precise, five Minuteman ICBMs. It was September 26, 1983.

Stanislav Petrov, 44, was the duty officer; his job was to register and report any apparent enemy missile launches. He hesitated…

Decades later, retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel, he spoke through the BBC's Russian Service. "I had all the data. If I had sent my report up the chain of command, nobody would have said a word against it."

If the data had been accurate; if there were anyone left with whom to speak after he'd acted. But, he didn't. On that night–counter to his explicit instructions and in a clear dereliction of duty, Petrov did not pass the information. Sensing false alarms, he dismissed them.

"The siren howled," he recalled, "but I just sat there for a few seconds, staring at the big, backlit, red screen with the word '*launch*' on it… All I had to do was to reach for the phone; to raise the direct line to our top commanders–but I couldn't move. I felt like I was sitting on a hot frying pan."

The system kept indicating the level of the alert reliability was "*highest.*" America had launched a missile. "A minute later the siren went off again. The second missile was launched. Then the third, and the fourth, and the fifth. The computers changed their alerts from '*launch*' to '*missile strike*'".

Imperative to act. In fact, Petrov considered, *too* imperative. "There were 28 or 29 security levels. After the target was identified, it had to pass all of those 'checkpoints'. I was not quite sure it was possible, underthose circumstances." Petrov instead reported a "system malfunction," and waited. "Twenty-three minutes later, I realized nothing had happened. If there had been a real strike, I would already know about it. It was such a relief."

This information did not come to light until after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Petrov was feted and received several international awards. Disclaiming hero status, he admitted the situation could have gone either way–he was never absolutely sure that it was a false alert. Petrov did note he was the only one of his team's officers who'd received a civilian education. "My colleagues were all professional soldiers, they were taught to give and obey orders… That was *my* job, but they were lucky it was me on shift that night." …..

October 27, 1962, somewhere in the waters off Cuba. Soviet naval officer Vasili Arkhipov was aboard a nuclear sub when US naval forces began dropping depth charges, searching for enemy submarines. Two of the sub's three officers, thinking a nuclear war might be underway, wanted to launch a nuclear torpedo inretaliation. Rules declared, however, that all three senior officers must agree. Officer Arkhipov refused, preventing an even earlier potential nuclear encounter.

The years and decades advance; weapons proliferate, increasing in their numbers and lethal power. "Winner" now a hollow word: Revenge is a dish best never served. ∎

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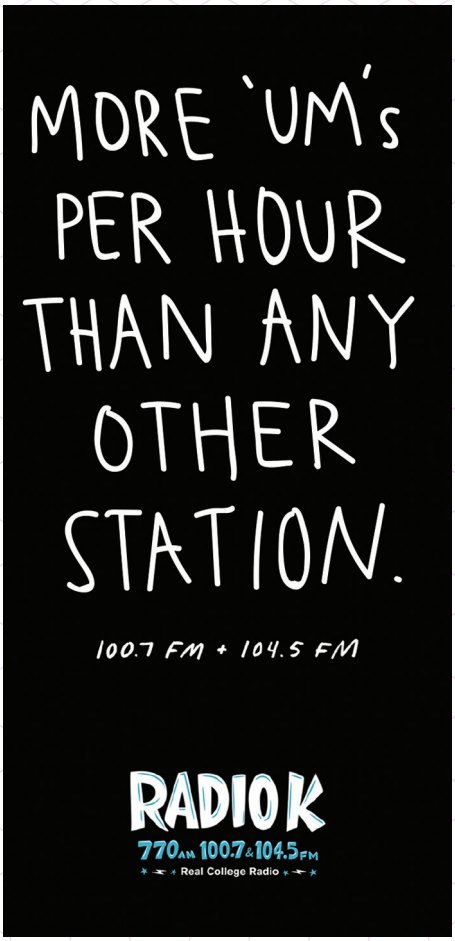
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Strolling through Mil-walk-ee

BY CARLA WALDEMAR

Someone let the genii out of the bottle.

When I lived in Milwaukee after college back in the day, the only fun to be had was an escape to Chicago for the weekend. Nowadays, Chicagoans in the know (as well as savvy Minnesotans) stream to Milwaukee for their glam getaways—seasoned, as only this city can, with a heavy sprinkle of gemutlichkeit. (That's German for 'friendliness,' a virtue which—along with brats and breweries—the city's early German immigrants carried with them.)

Those voting for glam will check out the design-driven Kinn Guest House, as high-tech a hostelry as I've ever encountered, while the gemutlichkeit lovers will find plenty of love to go around at the equally well-located Drury Plaza (free breakfast, dinner, and happy-hour drinks).

From there, it's a five-minute stroll to the hipster-centric Third Ward, home of bars, boutiques, and galleries. At its landmark Central Market, an indoor haven of food stands, fresh off the plane I sped to St. Paul Fish Company for a lobster tail on a stick (heads up, State Fair!) and the year's best Caesar salad. The building offers barbecue to sushi, burritos to French pastries –and that's only within ten yards of the entrance, where a slushie shop also sells Brandy Old Fashioneds and Milwaukee Mules.

The market anchors blocks (and blocks) of indie shopping ops, ranging from Shoo, with footwear to cure the wallflower in you (plus sequined ankle warmers) to Untuckt (shirts) and n l suits for bespoke menswear; from Access (for access-ories galore) to the Modern General Store, harboring contempo kitchenware.

At Retique (a Goodwill store showcasing castoffs of the city's millionaires), I snagged a snazzy Vera Wang number for less than the cost of a burger. I celebrated my victory at nearby Bavette La Boucherie, where I pampered my palate with chicken liver mousse crostini frosted with peach jam and blackberries, followed by one of the mega-sandwiches on which the kitchen rests its fame—mine, thick-cut pork loin in peach mole atop succotash, washed down by Wisconsin's Central Waters' Mudpuppy Porter. The farm-to-table sandwich list careens from Cuban to corned beef to Muffulettas and more.

After a fortifying meal like that, thank goodness for the River Walk that lines downtown's waterway for miles, dolled up with flower boxes, flags and sculptures. As I meander beside the water, rowing crews vie with fancy pleasure boats atop the ripples. I trek from the high-style Third Ward to old-style Third Street, a throwback in time that's home to sidewalk cafes like the Brat House, supplied by Usinger's, the iconic old-time butcher right across the street.

Then it's off in the opposite direction—south—for dinner at Morel, an anchor of the Walkers Point 'hood. Within its low-lit blond brick walls resides an open kitchen and platoons of cozy tables. From its locally-sourced menu, I dither between small plates like mushroom fricassee atop polenta or a salad of summer squash, feta, pine nuts, mint and chilies (Oh, what the heck? I order both), followed by a mélange of pork belly, bacon, chanterelles and corn kernels in smoky pork jus. And, for dessert (please, no food-shaming) a house-smoked ham biscuit slathered in honey butter. And those are just the starters: Were I a marathon diner, I'd have continued with entrees like the rabbit ragout on pappardelle. Or the lamb chop with Middle-Eastern merguez and tabouli with smoked eggplant aioli.

Calls for a beer. Long gone are the days when the iconic Milwaukee breweries of Miller, Pabst and Schlitz ruled the city (and the land). Lakefront, premier among today's micros, offers tours that sell out for two reasons: 1) guests start the tour with a pint in their hands rather than waiting thirstily for the conclusion and 2) comics like Ben, our guide, injecting zany, stand-up humor in their recitations of Beer 101.

The endless Great Lakefront it anchors is scalloped with walking/biking trails along the park-like shore, centered by the city's most-beloved icon, the Art Museum. Designed by Spanish star-chitect Calatrava, its snowy bird-wing

Top: St Paul Fish Co, Milwaukee Public Market. **Bottom:** Brice Smith, lgbt milWALKee: An Historic Walking Tour App. Photos by Carla Waldemar

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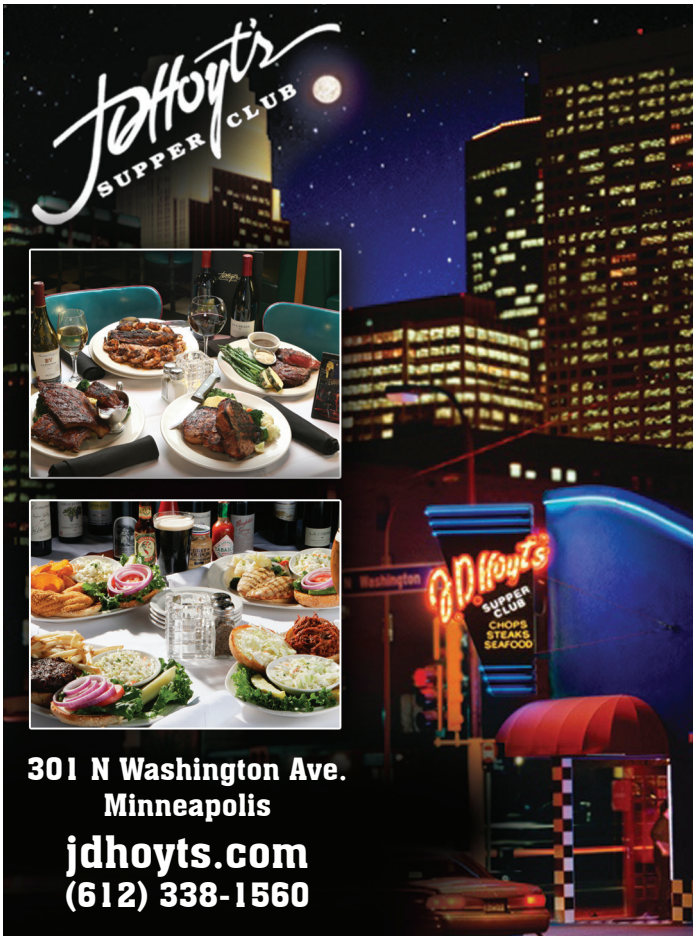


arms spread open daily at 10 and noon, ready for its close-up by selfie-clickers. The art they enfold stretches from the Dutch Golden Age to Haitian Outsiders, but shines especially brilliantly in its cache of contemporary masters—Chuck Close to Roy Lichtenstein to Jasper Johns. Then applaud the design explosion of what ivory tower-ists sniff at as "applied art": chairs by Frank Lloyd Wright, an IBM Selectric, a jukebox, an Evinrude boat motor.

Art at the Grohman celebrates paintings (oh, and don't miss the larger-than-life sculptures on the roof deck) of mankind at work, from the building of the Tower of Babel to the building of the Autobahn: farmers, miners, even a tax collector (Flemish, 17th century) and piano maker (German, 1947).

The Public Museum invites guests to stroll the streets of Old Milwaukee, then peer into "homes" of its diverse immigrants. America's Native tribes also get their due. More local history unfolds at America's Black Holocaust Museum, whose founder survived a lynching attempt and false imprisonment.

For those who claim to be bored by museums, I dare you to snooze through these two: The Bobblehead Hall of Fame & Museum (the only one in the world) with 7,000 figures wobbling through all periods and genres (but heavy on sports idols)—from Marilyn Monroe to Mickey Mouse, RBG to Dr. Fauci.

Milwaukee is home to Harley Davidson, and the fabulous Harley Davidson Museum is home to hundreds of models since 1905, showcased year by year. It's also a mini-course in American history, as bikes replaced ponies for mail delivery and transported everyone from policemen to wartime soldiers ("Uncle Sam's choice," according to ads of the day). Women hopped on in the 1920s, and Hollywood fed the charisma with films like "Easy Rider." Also on view: stuntman Eve Knievel's antics and Elvis' bling-y custom model.

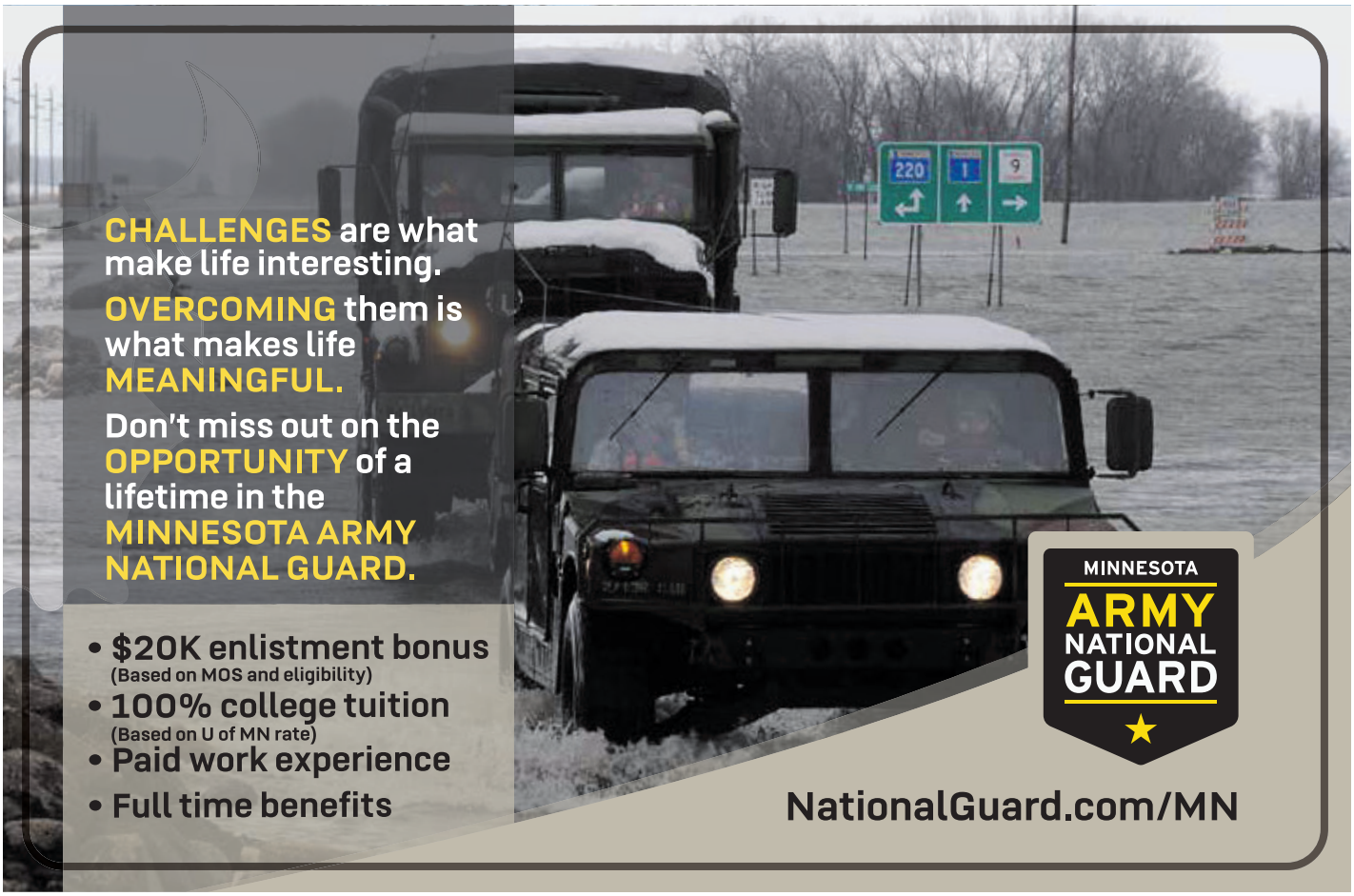
Nothing like a Harley hog to whet the appetite for the farm-bred variety. My final dinner, at Bartolattas' Lake Park Bistro, commenced with pork pate and a silky chicken-liver mousse. I continued to nibble through the classic bistro fare of France, from garlicky escargot (how long has it been since you've spotted them on a menu?), mussels marinieres, and the onion soup of my dreams. The star of the evening was Dover sole meuniere—an entire fish filleted tableside, just like the palaces of gastronomy in Paris. Then a trio of dreamy, patisserie-perfect desserts: profiteroles, a creamy, almond-forward mousse, and crème brulee—reason enough (among many) to make haste to Milwaukee. To start planning, check out www.visitmilwaukee.org. ▮

A Journey Through Milwaukee's GLBT History

Brice Smith has created IgbtmilWALKee.com, a free app to download via the App Store or Google Play. Click on 'Explore' to view mini-documentaries covering 25 historic LGBT sites via three themed tours, to experience virtually or, as Brice and I did, on the hoof. We began at the site of the former River Queen Hotel of 1843, which re-opened in 1971 as an LGBT bar, complete with chandeliers and performers including Liberace and Carol Channing. Police harassment ended its run.

Then 'meet' Billie Herrero, a drag queen who channeled Gypsy Rose Lee. Check out the building that hosted the Black Nite, where a pre-Stonewall uprising exploded. Ballgame Town of 1974, known for wild parties, was launched as the first sports bar in the city, and the first to pay its drag show queens.

Today's primo gay and lesbian bars, says Brice, are Le Cage and Walkers Pint in the Walkers Point hood and This Is It in Cathedral Hill. Pridefest has been held each June since 1985 in Festival Park—your chance to dunk a drag queen, among other hijinks.



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Photos courtesy of Universal Studios via Getty Images

Billy Eichner on *Bros* And LGBTQ Romance on Film

BY TIM NASSON

Billy Eichner, the openly gay comedian, is usually the one asking the questions. Eichner came to fame with his award-winning, 2011-2017 truTVshow, "Billy On The Street", where he would accost strangers on the streets of Manhattan, often with an A-list celebrity at his side. Eichner would interrupt someone in the middle of a jog, an errand, or daily commute, to ask a groan-inducing question or play a silly game. Most New Yorkers did not recognize either Eichner or celebrity sidekicks like Chris Evans, Will Ferrell, Mariah Carrey, or Sarah Jessica Parker.

The tides have turned. Eichner, in a few short years, has gone from video class clown to a polished (dare I say very good) actor, writer, and all-around mensch – and ascended to celebrity A-list status himself. In 2019, he starred as the voice of Timon in the Disney live action remake of *The Lion King*. He also voices Timon in the upcoming live-action sequel: *Mufasa: The Lion King*.

But that's not all. Currently, Eichner is writer, producer, and co-star of *Bros*, a new romantic comedy about two commitment-phobic gay guys in a relationship—Eichner and costar Luke MacFarlane. MacFarlane—who came to fame playing in schmaltzy Hallmark Channel movies— is another openly gay (not to mention very good looking) actor; indeed, all of *Bros*' writers, producers, and all of the lead and supporting actors (including Amanda Bearse) identify as LGBTQ (with the exceptions of director Nicolas Stoller and producer Judd Apatow.) *Bros* is the first 'almost' all gay, lesbian or trans major motion picture.

"My day hasn't even begun," says Eichner who has just arrived in San Francisco, and where it's the ungodly hour of 7:45 a.m. He's just back from the Toronto International Film Festival, where *Bros* debuted to great acclaim.

"The goal was to make the funniest, laugh-out-loud movie as possible, that just happens to be about a gay couple," explains Eichner. At forty-four, he is old enough to remember growing up during a time when gay themed movies had limited releases and smallish audiences. "I went to see a lot of them," Eichner recalls. *All Over the Guy*, *Jeffrey*, *Trick*, *Edge of Seventeen*, *Go*. But it felt like it was something I did in private. It felt like it did when I was hiding a magazine [for secrecy at home]."

Bros is written for contemporary audiences —straight, gay, and everything in between (my words) —who are unfazed by scenes and situations that would have seemed controversial even ten years ago. And, given the talent behind the project and the early buzz, *Bros* could be the

Continue on page 16

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first gay romcom to become a mainstream box office smash.

Particularly with director Nicolas Stoller and producer Judd Apatow on board. "*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Bridesmaids*, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, *Neighbors*….Judd and/or Nick are responsible for some of the funniest movies during the past two decades," Eichner enthuses.

One of the most charming aspects of *Bros* is a pivotal scene filmed in Provincetown, MA, a community with deep gay roots. "Provincetown is maybe my favorite place on earth," says Eichner. "It's as far out on Cape Cod, Massachusetts as you can get. Being able to film in Provincetown added so much style to the classical romantic story. The town has a rich, gay history but is beautiful, sexy, and fun. It is so welcoming to everyone that Nick [Stoller, the director], who is straight, and married with three kids, takes his family there every summer. Iti is also the first place that we began filming." The production was shut down in between filming for over a year and a half due to COVID-19.

Is there any romance going on in Eichner's life? When I asked him for a funny story about a first date, he laughed and said, "I'm still waiting to go on one. But, seriously, I met a guy that worked for a cannabis company. He showed up as high as he could be. And of course he was hungry. I should have just called it a night then. But we went out and all he could do was eat. There wasn't any conversation. But I don't know if that is funny, or just weird."

There's a musical moment in *Bros* that may surprise some Eichner fans—but shouldn't; he's a great singer and studied musical theater in college. His love of music predates his bar mitzvah , which he describes as "Broadway meets Pop Music…I had a life-sized, airbrushed Madonna standee from her 'Blonde Ambition' tour. And a standee from [the Broadway musical] 'The Phantom of the Opera'. I even sang 'Lean On Me.'"

Eichner's singing talents are displayed in *Bros*, but very briefly. "I don't want people to think *Bros* is a musical, though," Eichner wants readers to know. And let me add my two cents: *Bros* is not a musical, at all. It is a comedy that is going to go down in history, in a great way. ∎

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"Healing Through Revealing": Photographer Kerstyn Johnson Provides Grace Through Lace

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

Photos by Kerstyn Johnson/Boudoir Photography by KJ

"He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him."
– *The Ugly Duckling*

Something beautiful often starts out as something ugly, as Hans Christian Anderson and Kerstyn "KJ" Johnson can both attest. "I have personally been sexually assaulted by a man," the Stillwater-based shutterbug professes. "I have had a bad gynecologist experience, as well. Both of these experiences have been very traumatic for me. I am, of course, upset that this has happened to me. However, I am glad it has helped me relate to so many women."

That relatability was key when Johnson leaned into the ugliness of her twin tragedies, turning them into the beautiful tools of a specific trade—that of boudoir photography. "'Boudoir' is a French word meaning 'a women's private room,'" Johnson explains. Remembering the genre's decades-old origins, she adds, "Back then, boudoir was basically another word for a women's bedroom, a place where she can just be with herself."

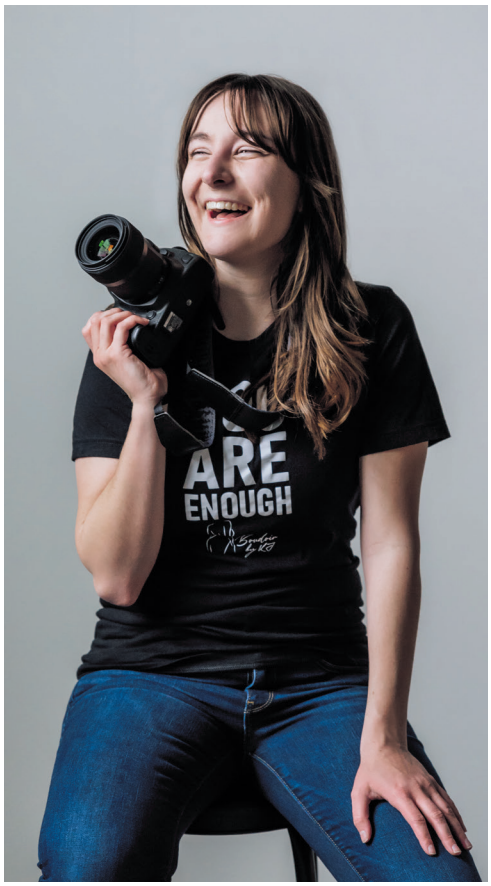
In short, boudoir photography is a point-and-shoot style featuring subject images that range from sensual to intimate, from romantic to erotic. Notes Johnson, "I think this is beautiful because boudoir is all about me capturing my client's beauty as a woman just as she is."

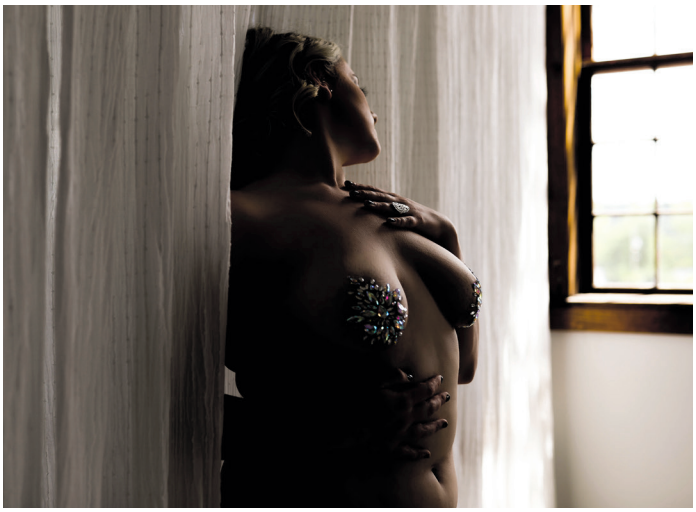
Such photography can serve as a means for other women to cope with personal tragedies that run parallel to Johnson's. "For women who have been abused, boudoir photography is about taking their power back," Kerstyn Johnson insists. "Feeling like they have a choice of what happens to their body for once."

When her career began, Johnson was taken aback by the sheer number of such tragedies. Johnson remembers, "I never expected to help so many women who have been sexually assaulted, who have had miscarriages, or who have suffered other forms of abuse until now."

In her current practice, each tragedy requires a lens-like focus from the photographer herself. "For those who have had miscarriages, they have told me all they see is their body failing them," Johnson recounts. "It has taken their sexiness away in the bedroom and they look at their body so negatively. Boudoir has helped them take back their sexiness and look at their body in a new, positive way."

That new, positive way can take on a beauty all its own. "I have laughed and cried with my clients through their experiences that they have shared with me," Johnson confesses. "I am taking such intimate photos of my clients that we usually open up to each other about personal experi-





ences. By the end of the shoot I feel like I've always made a new friend."

Those new friends come in all shapes and sizes, colors and creeds. "Most of my clients are women who want to stop fighting with their bodies and the unfair societal norms that are put up on them," Johnson affirms. "I get a lot of brides who want to do boudoir as a gift to their husband on their wedding night. However, most women, even if it is a wedding gift, also want to do it for themselves."

Sometimes, the "private room" is a room for two. "For couples, this is a way to be intimate in a new way and bring you closer together with your partner," Johnson reveals. "You can make a whole romantic date out of it for the day."

Johnson's remedial approach to portrait photography is no coincidence. "Before boudoir, I was accepted into a doctorate program for chiropractic," she recollects. "I gave it up to do boudoir. I was originally going to school so I could learn how to be a healer. However, I realized by me doing boudoir for women, I was already a healer to them."

People living within post-Puritan America and outside the boudoir universe sometimes draw their own conclusions about the artform. "The biggest misunderstanding I get is that boudoir is porn, and therefore, that means it's sinful and bad," Johnson notes. "This hurts me so badly inside when I see women truly healing from this experience. How can boudoir be sinful and bad if it is helping empower so many women?"

This notion is a thoroughly personal one to the artist. "I came from a very strong Christian background," she affirms. "I know how religion can sometimes place a negative mindset on our bodies and sexuality. If this has happened to you, I am sorry you have felt this way and have had to deal with this issue. I still consider myself a Christian. However, my Jesus loves everyone, and I believe my God made me wonderfully."

Issues of faith notwithstanding, prospective subjects are sometimes more than a little skittish about being immortalized in their skivvies. "Ninety-eight percent of my clients who walk into a boudoir photo shoot are nervous to do the shoot in some way," Johnson says. "When you're on the fence about a boudoir photo shoot for self-confidence reasons that's when you need it the most."

Trepidation is soothed by reassurances both visible and invisible. "I always say, 'Just give me ten minutes, and you'll calm down after that and forget that you were even nervous to begin with.'" Johnson promises. "I pose you from head to toe, so you don't even need to worry about your facial expressions or not posing right. I usually demonstrate and talk during the demonstration with pointers on the pose for each pose we do. That way, even if you're a visual or auditory learner, I got you!"

Like the swan of Anderson's fairy tale, Johnson and her clients are able to rise above their troubles and enjoy the hard-won happiness around them. "I think women's bodies are true pieces of art work, no matter the shape, size, or color!" Johnson proclaims. "We are all so uniquely different, and it's so beautiful to see!" ▮

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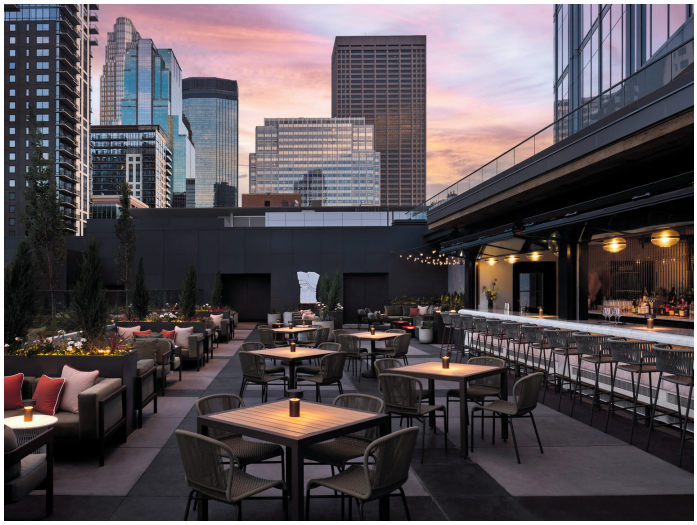
Minneapolis' Newest Luxury Hotel Opens its Doors to the Community

BY SUSAN SWAVELY



Photos courtesy of Four Seasons Hotels Limited

If you're looking for the perfect place to stay in Minneapolis, look no further than the brand new Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis!

Situated in beautiful downtown Minneapolis, Four Seasons has everything you could possibly want in the way of luxury: relaxation, community engagement, and fun. Four Seasons is also dedicated to creating the finest spot for receptions, honeymoons, and weddings.

As General Manager, Florian Riedel, says, "This is *your* Four Seasons! And it is more than a hotel. It is a beacon bringing people together. Here you'll meet our diverse staff who will greet you by name, the business professionals with offices in our building, the residents who will live on our uppermost floors, and guests from down the street and around the world."

Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis is an all-encompassing, deluxe experience for everyone who walks through the doors. Riedel says, "When we opened our doors to the community on June 1… we [were] committed to being great neighbors. At Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis, we believe in the Golden Rule – treating people with respect and kindness, the way we want to be treated… We strive to host inclusive programming and create events for everyone. This summer we invited the community to participate in nature walks, yoga on the terrace and DJ performances at Riva."

With all these activities, it's impossible to be bored once you enter this downtown oasis. Relax at The Spa, enjoy refreshing food and beverages at one of the finest restaurants, or simply enjoy the incredible view of gorgeous downtown Minneapolis out the window of your comfortable suite. Riedel mentions that the thing that moves her most is "seeing the community gather in our restaurants, enjoy one another's company, and be fed in every sense." Four Seasons is devoted to making their guests' stays FUN! Florian Riedel says that there is, "an entire floor dedicated to fun… I'd suggest starting there! You'll see. There truly is something for everyone here." What's not to love about a beautiful hotel with a whole floor of mystery fun?

Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis isn't only a hotel, it's also the perfect venue for your wedding and reception! If you're looking for a picture-perfect place for a romantic wedding in the Twin Cities, the search is over! Take it from Four Seasons Wedding and Events Manager, Jessica Tober, "Nestled in the heart of Minneapolis lies the most prestigious new destination for weddings, the perfect place to say, 'I Do!' With a choice of stylish and modern function rooms, even a stunning outdoor venue, the hotel is the perfect venue as it gives you the opportunity to make your day unique. We will work with you to bring your celebration vision to life, assisting with all event details from beginning to end." Your wedding is already the most magical day of your life, and if you host your loved ones at Four Seasons Hotel, you can rest assured that the only hitch on your perfect day is you to your beloved!

Tober elaborates, "our exceptional team is passionate about what we do, and this is seamlessly executed, letting you relax in confidence that your wedding celebration will be a stunning experience for you and your guests." You and your invitees can enjoy the city lights and sights, as Tober explains, "Our guest rooms and suites have impeccable views of the city and the historic landmarks that we hold dear to Minneapolis."

Having your wedding or honeymoon at Four Seasons Hotel will give your friends and family incredible memories to last a lifetime. They will enjoy the comfort and beauty of the hotel and get to focus on your lovely marriage all at the same time, all while every one of your desires is taken care of. "Our team has an eye for detail and a passion to elevate each and every experience, ensuring every guest walks away talking about their

favorite 'wow' moment."

Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis also has a very important connection to the residents of the lovely city where it is located. The hotel takes care of guests and visitors, of course, but more than that, General Manager Riedel says, "Our community involvement… extends beyond the hotel as our team has pledged to devote 3,500 hours a year to downtown restoration, social justice and health and wellness initiatives. We have also pledged to prioritize local sourcing, eliminate single-use plastics, and use biodegradable and compostable packages. Something I find particularly unique about our sustainability initiatives happens in The Spa. Our team has launched what we call the 'Floral Forever Project' where fresh flowers in the hotel are dried and pressed to give them a second life in The Spa."

And the hotel is committed to finding more ways to lessen its impact on the environment while broadening its impact on the community. Guests can rest assured they are contributing to the betterment of the world and the local community by staying at Four Seasons Hotel. There are no down sides to being a guest at the most lavish new hotel in downtown Minneapolis. Florian Riedel says it best, "Here at Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis, we have adopted the motto of Minnesota: we aspire to be the Star of the North. To us this means shining bright in all we do. Leading by our light. We aim to be people and a place our community is proud of."

Book your stay at Four Seasons Hotel Minneapolis today and enjoy some well-deserved luxury! ▮

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Our Couples: The Fall 2022 Edition

Jayne Schaecher & Heidi Schrieber

It seems appropriate that we feature Heidi Schrieber, one of this year's *Lavender Magazine* Community Award Winners, and her wife Jayne Schaecher, on our cover of this issue. They are a dynamic couple who have done so much for our community over the years.

Let's read their love story…

How did you both meet?

"We met in 1985 in Lincoln, NE. Heidi was friends with Jayne's sister, Carol, and she said we should meet. We dated for a bit, nothing serious, and then Heidi took a job in Kansas City. Heidi moved to Minneapolis in 1993. Never heard or saw each other again until we ran into each other in 2001 at the bar, Boom!

"We did a 5 minute catch up, as Jayne had moved here to live in 1996. We did not see each other again until 2009 when a mutual friend of ours found out we knew each other and played matchmaker. This time it worked, and we got married in 2015!"

Talk about the highlights of your life journey together.

"We both have very similar likes. We travel and have been around the U.S. and several European countries. Being active is also one of our favorites; golfing, riding bikes, taking our labradoodles with us on adventures. It is so nice to have someone who 'gets you' to share your life with."

Talk about your present and future as a couple.

"At this point we are putting a lot of energy into our new house and planning a big vacation to seven European countries. We are very cognizant of staying healthy and continuing to enjoy friends and family.

"We both agree that being married is the best!"

Mark Waldorf & Kyle Walsh

Waldorf is not just the President of Outloud Promotions. He is also a happily married man. Now, we'll let Waldorf talk about the love of his life..

How did you two meet?

"We 'officially' met at the Quorum holiday party in 2014; that's where we had our first one-on-one conversation and ended up exchanging phone numbers. Prior to that we were acquaintances who saw each other at social events. Our first date was two days after the holiday party, and we have been together ever since."

Talk about highlights of your life journey so far.

"We were together for almost seven years before our wedding, and it's been just over one year since our wedding, so a lot of the highlights occurred before we got married. Those include falling in love, meeting each other's families, moving in together, renovating our home, traveling to amazing destinations, and generally being there for each other through the highs and lows of life. The highlight of highlights was committing to each other through marriage and celebrating with our loved ones. It was perfect."

"If there is one word we would use to describe our wedding, it would be "magical!" The Bakken Museum was the perfect venue for our outdoor wedding, and we lucked out with great weather. Our ceremony was held in the beautiful gardens with a string quartet, and our reception and dance were held on the grass rooftop overlooking Lake Bde Maka Ska with an 8-piece band. With its gorgeous architecture, majestic gardens, and hands-on scientific experiments and displays available to our guests, the Bakken Museum is a venue that is so unique and charming that our guests still talk about it one year later. But the most important part of our wedding day was that we were able to celebrate our commitment with our family and friends, and even had a special appearance from our dog, Gille. It was a day we will remember and cherish forever."

Talk about your present and future as a couple.

"At present we are enjoying family life with our Golden Retriever, Gillie, and planning our next adventure – our honeymoon. Our future ideally includes lots of travel, new experiences, and continuing to escape the Minnesota winters. Being there for our family, friends, and each other makes our present and future very exciting."

Josh Kelly & Mike Welton

Welton is one of our more renowned artists in our community. His work reflects the great scenes in and around the Twin Cities – some of which can be seen around the area. Let's see how Welton and Kelly have found love together.

How did you two meet?

"We met at a "Boys and Brews" meeting. Even though Josh noticed Mike right away from through the window of LynLake Brewery, Mike did not see him come in, but he sat down right next to Mike and just started talking. We never stopped talking and then went on a date to a distillery later that night. We kept talking and keeping each other company during the pandemic."

Talk about highlights of your life journey so far.

"Well, we have been though major life changes in the 2 and a half years together.

"For us the highlight has been meeting Josh's family in New Mexico and feeling a part of his family. Josh took Mike on a tour of rural New Mexico on a show and tell of how it was growing up gay in secluded, conservative environment. Another highlight was Mike being a supportive partner

Top: Photo provided by Jayne Schaecher and Heidi Shrieber, **Middle:** Photo provided by Mark Waldorf, **Bottom:** Photo provided by Mike Welton

when Josh's mother died. That experience grew our understanding of each other."

Talk about your present and future as a couple.

"We both want similar things out of life. We workout three times a week. Josh has taught Mike about food/drink and cooking. We have never owned a home with someone, and we are learning about that together. The other weekend in Washburn, Wisconsin while at a gallery, Josh and Mike talked about how the gallery was being run and the things we would love to bring to a co-ownership of a similar community gallery. Helping each other with our art. Josh with woodworking and Mike selling paintings. Mike has a more business sense that has helped and has encouraged Josh's woodworking."

Photo by Robert Godridge Photography

Richard & Charles Herod

Everyone knows Richard Herod III as the face and the driving force of White Bear Mitsubishi and The Bear Lot. You can now add "happy married man" to everything he has accomplished. Let's meet him and his husband, Charles!

How did you and Charles met?

"Charles and I met online. When I saw his smile and then figured out he was also into cars, I had to get to know him, even if it just meant that we were to be friends. Given that he lived in the bay area of California, it required that we get to know each other a bit before we finally met in person.

"We agreed to meet about 45 days later in Phoenix, Arizona. Our first date was attending the Barrett Jackson Auto Auction, which was a must for two car enthusiasts. We went on a handful of dates over the course of a few days and even hiked Camelback Mountain together.

"Given that we met right before the heart of the pandemic in early 2020, traveling back and forth to see each other proved problematic, but we made it work.

"We were engaged later in 2020 and moved Charles to Minnesota where he now works for the family business buying used cars for resale at both the dealerships Richard owns (White Bear Mitsubishi and The Bear Lot Motorsports – Mounds View.)"

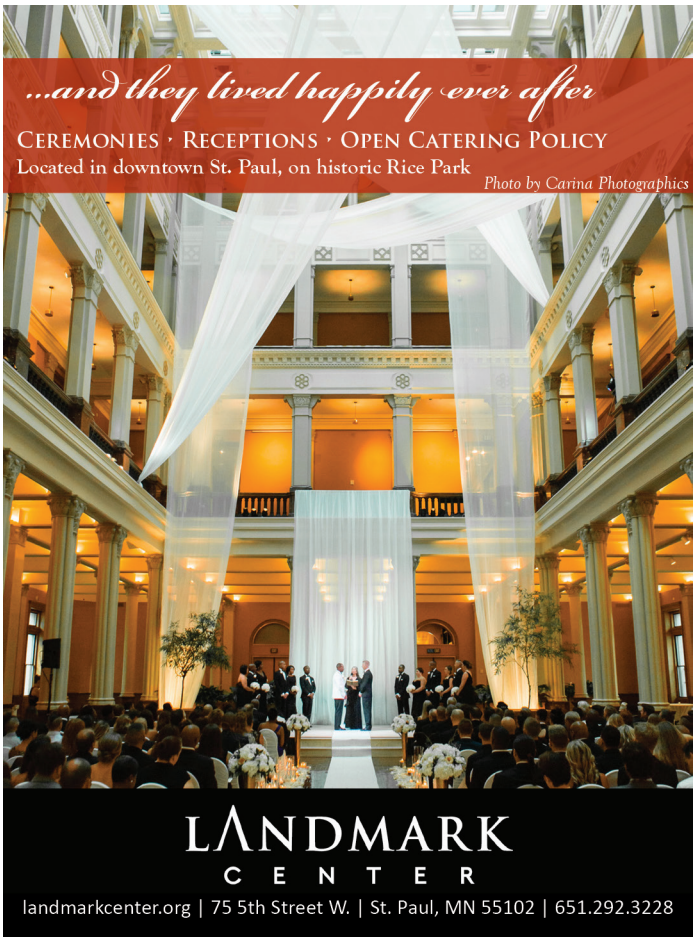
Tell us about the wedding? How did it all come together?

"It was almost impossible to try to get married in 2021 during the pandemic as many wedding venues had shuttered. We postponed our wedding ambitions until 2022 and we both thought that getting married on Camelback Mountain in Paradise Valley, Arizona (outside Phoenix) would be the perfect place for us to say "I dos". We agreed to have a destination wedding and then throw a "Herod Homecoming" wedding dance after our return from our wedding.

"Getting married at the Sanctuary was absolutely perfect. We could not have asked for a more perfect wedding. We were married on Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022 in front of our family, friends and those we consider an integral part of our village."

Talk about your present and future as a couple.

"We have a lovely family with our two French bulldogs, Bruiser and Reece and look forward to growing this family. The two things that brought us together instantly (other than our mutual love of cars) was faith and family. Charles and I plan to start growing our family in 2023. We are still trying to figure out how many kids our target is – but our goal is to start with 2 kids and grow from there. We believe that our path includes surrogacy and adoption and look forward to being parents together." ▮



Fly on Over to Local Restaurant Holman's Table...Literally or Figuratively

BY ELISE MAREN

For a worldly staycation – or a great wedding reception or date night – look no further than Holman's Table. This one-of-a-kind restaurant captures the essence of luxury travel between its multiple dining and event spaces, as well as the chance to dine on a tarmac. Holman's Table originated from an opportunity to partner with the Metropolitan Airports Commission to open a restaurant in a newly renovated space in the Old Terminal at the historic St. Paul Downtown Airport.

Although the concept and location of Holman's Table is utterly unique, restaurateur Troy Reding of Ally Restaurants and Rock Elm Tavern did not shy away from the possibility. After forming a connection with the Director of Reliever Airports with the Metropolitan Airports Commission, Joe Harris, the enthusiastic partnership led to the creation of a strong brand and concept. As a result, Holman's Table opened just in time for the 2018 Super Bowl, drawing in hundreds of planes to Holman Field. Since Holman's Table is located at a private airport, guests with access to private planes can fly directly to Holman Field. The timing facilitated local and national popularity, drawing in more people to visit the Twin Cities.

The namesake of Holman's Table is Charles W. "Speed" Holman, a historical figure born in Minneapolis in 1898 who earned his nickname from pranks and motorcycle racing in his early life. After learning to fly planes at age twenty-two, he became a household name as a stunt artist, cross-country racer, and Midwestern airmail pioneer. He became so famous that his funeral was the largest in state history with one hundred thousand people in attendance between the funeral route and the cemetery. While there are several stories which inspired the naming of Holman's Table, one of the most noteworthy is that Holman once flew over the St. Paul Downtown Airport with 1,433 loops in succession.

Photos courtesy of Holman's Table

Separate from the Dining Room, there is a space with its own bar snack and drink menu called Cora's Lounge. This luxurious lounge honors Cora Fuller, the first licensed female pilot from Minnesota. Guests of Holman's Table can enjoy Happy Hour in Cora's Lounge.

If guests are looking to host a private dining experience, whether that be for rehearsal dinners, company gatherings, or other celebrations, the Earhart Room is ready with customizable chef-crafted catering menus, cocktails, and exceptional service. Staff at Holman's Table report that "Guests are always enamored with the space itself; they love how unique it is. The interior is stunning, and they are thrilled to bring guests to a hidden local gem. They are wowed by the selection of chef-crafted food and stellar service."

Although the theme centers the history of plane travel, Holman's Table prioritizes local businesses. They recently formed a partnership with Feller's Ranch in Conger, MN to source top-notch wagyu beef for their burgers and steaks. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, Ellsworth cheese curds are a household name. You can find that comfort snack as an ingredient for the poutine on the menu ($15). Other local products used in their menu include Red Lake Nation wild rice, Tappers maple syrup, and Revol Greens produce. In the warmer months, staff visit the St. Paul Farmer's Market to find inspiration and purchase ingredients for their specials.

Representatives from Holman's Table report that the most ordered item on the menu is the mushroom toast ($15). Consisting of roasted wild mushrooms, walnut aioli, montamore cheese, herb ciabatta, and a red onion marmalade, most tables order this plate as a starter. Another intriguing item is the 300 Dollar Burger featuring gruyere, madeira truffle demi, foie gras butter, and wedge potatoes ($25).

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Since its sister restaurants feature burgers, staff felt that the menu needed a burger that captured the essence of Holman's Table. Chef Garret suggested, "Why not top it with foie gras and serve it with something other than fries?" The name comes from an old saying that pilots would spend $100 on a hamburger for lunch just for an excuse to fly their plane, and $200 was jokingly added to the name to account for inflation.

If you are not a pilot yet remain literally interested in flying to dinner, Holman's Table has partnered with Minneapolis Helicopters for a dinner plus flight experience. Helicopter tours can be scheduled for before or after dinner reservations. Flights can be booked online for Saturday reservations between 3-8 pm and dinner reservations can be made by phone or online.

The patio sits on the tarmac of the historic terminal building, so it is not uncommon for planes to saunter up to the front door of the restaurant. Due to the otherworldly experience of having a plane land next to you while you eat lunch, the patio was recently expanded to accommodate more guests for dining or events. Between the tarmac, Dining Room, Cora's Lounge, and the Earhart Room, there is more than enough to explore when you embark on your first journey to Holman's Table. ∎

Holman's Table

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Dining Room Hours: 11:00 AM-9:00 PM Tuesday-Friday; 9:00 AM-10:00 PM Saturday; 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Sunday
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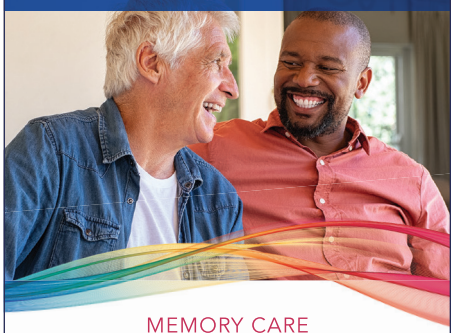

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Improving the Quality of Life for LGBTQ Older Adults

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

Aging is a reality of life, one that brings new and difficult challenges to the table, especially for the LGBTQ community. Many older folks in our community are not only feeling the effects of social isolation, but are anxious and fearful about their options for senior care.

What is the LGBTQ older adult community facing as they age that others are not? Do LGBTQ-friendly senior care facilities even exist? Is anyone trying to help?

Turns out, there is more good news than bad news.

We talked to two researchers at the University of Minnesota who are doing incredible work to obtain hard evidence to support productive solutions for our older adults so they can navigate their later years with peace and ease.

Dr. Rajean Moone, faculty director for long-term care administration at the U of M, was the principal investigator on the 2022 LGBTQ Aging Needs Assessment, one of very few studies done to gain information on the aging LGBTQ population in Minnesota. The LGBTQ population has woefully been left out of data collection in our state and nationwide, but the needs assessment is a huge step in the right direction. The needs assessment has been sent out every ten years since 2002, this year in mostly electronic form. In the 2022 study, there was a 46-question survey taken by 354 LGBTQ-identifying participants aged 50 and over.

The survey found that, compared to the general population, LGBTQ older adults:

- Are nearly *twice as likely* to be caregivers
- Are *less likely* to have a friend or family member to provide care for them
- Are *half as likely* to have children
- Are *more likely* to report not having enough close friends

"Often when we think of senior care, we think of nursing homes and assisted living facilities, but at any given time, a very small fraction of the population reside in senior care [facilities]," Moone points out. "Over 90% of care for older Minnesotans is provided informally and unpaid by friend and family members." This illustrates the critical need for senior care facilities to be able to serve the LGBTQ community, many just don't have the supports in place to get that care elsewhere.

So, we have a little bit of data, *now what?*

Moone has teamed up with Dr. Simon Rosser, professor and researcher in the school of public health at the U of M who has been researching gay men's health for 30 years, and Dr. Tetyana Shippee, associate professor in the division of health policy and management, to dig into the policies senior care facilities currently have to support their LGBTQ older adults, as well as develop and test the efficacy of training for employees.

One of the open-ended questions on the needs assessment asked individuals to identify what signals to them an LGBTQ welcoming provider, and a few criteria were mentioned: do they display a rainbow flag, does their literature show same-sex couples, do they have LGBTQ staff, do they or do they not "pull their hand away when I say I am a part of the LGBTQ community" – simple practices that can make a world of difference to eliminate fear and help folks truly feel at ease and at home. These are the types of policies and practices our researchers are looking for in facilities, among others.

Developing and utilizing excellent staff training is the key to changing policies and making spaces more welcoming. This is the biggest goal for Moone, Rosser, and Shippee.

A huge barrier to implementing training, however, is the fact that the senior care industry is currently experiencing massive rates of direct staff turnover.

Their solution?

Translate the current well-established Training to Serve training program into a one hour, self-directed e-training: one that is easy-to-use and can be available at any time to any staff member.

"We're hoping to help with some of that turnover," Moone explains. "The model Training to Serve has been using is — it's an in-person, a one and done. But that doesn't solve your workforce turnover issues when, you've done the training, and then the next day you have five new staff, or five staff leave."

Another goal is making it national.

"Minnesota is really fortunate that Rajean has lead the way with this training," Rosser says gratefully. "The situation for LGBT seniors in some places are so bad that two states now, California and Massachusetts, have legislated that every staff member needs training." Bringing Training to Serve curriculum to the National Institutes of Health could be a game changer.

That's where the science comes in. If they can prove, through randomized controlled trials, that this training *really works*, then Rosser says, determinedly, "we can present it to the nation and say 'look, these are the data, this works, and it's really important.'"

There is hope for the future, and this star team is leading the way to make the world a better place for our older adult community. ∎

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Friends & Co. *– Organization for older adults to connect and receive support – check out their "Let's Do Lunch" gatherings! friendsco.org*

Rainbow Health *– Resource for healthcare providers and staff to access training and education rainbowhealth.org*

SAGE *– Advocacy and services for LGBTQ elders and the people who serve them www.sageusa.org*

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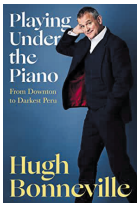
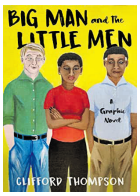


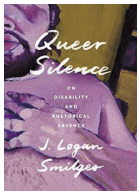
Playing Under the Piano: From Downton to Darkest Peru

A treat for those who know the author only through the six seasons of "*Downton Abbey*" to hear Robert Crawley, aka Hugh Bonneville, fill in some biographical gaps, from his debut as Third Shepherd in his school nativity play to treading the boards with the likes of Judi Dench and Kenneth Branagh. Some idols have feet of clay, but Bonneville treads lightly through his narratives, witty, sly, drawing the reader in with every word. Running lines with Dame Maggie Smith for Lady Violet's death scene in her final "*Downton Abbey*" appearance will break your heart. Bonneville learned after his mother's death that she had had a life in the secret service, and, steadfast onstage and off, accompanied his dad along the darkening path of dementia.



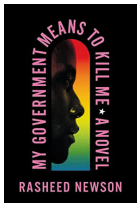
Big Man and the Little Men: A Graphic Novel

April Wells, a young memoirist and essay writer is thrilled but puzzled that she has been chosen to cover William Waters, the presumptive presidential candidate, during the in the debate to be held in her hometown's new stadium. Is Waters the good guy he's painted to be? A young woman approaches April accusing Waters of abuse. The opponent? Anti-intellectual, bigot, grasping power through divisiveness. Best to hold those accusations or be open and risk Waters's chances? April confers with her editor who is then "disappeared." She seeks an old friend, Big Man of the title, who helps open her eyes to see and ask, who planted the rape rumors? And why? One must never forget to question cui bono, and further, can wrongs beget rights?



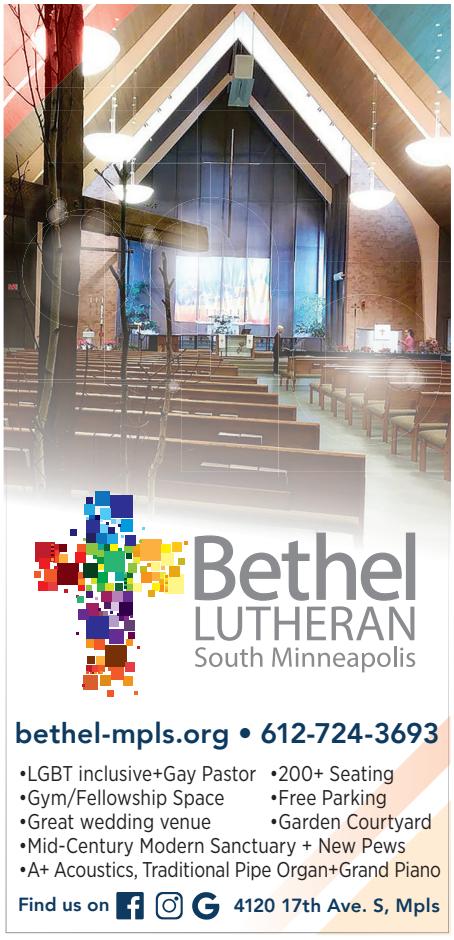
Queer Silence: On Disability and Rhetorical Absence

Silence, Smilges asserts, does not have to equate death as has so often been held gospel. He quotes both Jacques Derrida ("who concluded silence is at the foundation of all signification, that it 'bears and haunts' meaning") and Michel Foucault ("there is not one but many silences…that underlie and permeate discourses") as the starting point for his own theorizations, that silence is meaningful even though requiring "a different analytic than speech." Silence, indeed can be generative and performative, the latter intensely displayed in the photographs of Rodney Bell's aerial wheelchair dance during Sins Invalid Performance in 2008. Smilges first explores the history of many negative attitudes towards silence, then invites one to explore what people "whose body-minds signify more than their words" convey through silence.



My Government Means to Kill Me

Imagine a Black Candide, come fresh from the Midwest to the Big Apple, replete with dreams and urges to cultivate many gardens… It's 1985, seventeen-year-old Trey (Earl Singleton III), fleeing Indiana, renouncing a six-figure trust fund, lands at the Chelsea Hotel with no financial prospects. AIDS is rife. Over two years, many evenings are spent cultivating black denizens of the Mt. Morris Baths–including an elderly Bayard Rustin who becomes Trey's mentor. During daylight hours Trey clashes with the likes of Fred Trump and myriad others for whom the author has provided explanatory footnotes. An odd addition to either a novel or a purported memoir, but one must remember the 80s now are 40 years gone. Anger, violence, bad words and sex! A roller-coaster read. ∎



Photos by Randy Stern

Riding To Your Wedding in Style

BY RANDY STERN

It is your special day. The day you and your significant other become much more significant. "Through sickness and health; 'til death do you part."

The wedding planner had everything set for you. The setting with the officiant, the invitations to your friends on both sides, and the reception with food, music, dancing, and joy all around.

Everything is set. The dream wedding is underway. How will you get around on that day?

These days, vehicles that will take you to the chapel, the reception, and off to your honeymoon are available in many different ways. Most common are large SUVs, emulating the space once occupied by stretched limousines. They have become the choice for livery services to deliver you to the ceremony on time.

So, imagine arriving to your special day in this 2022 Lincoln Navigator Black Label…

It is a special vehicle, indeed. Not a horse-drawn coach nor your friend's Subaru. Nor is it a classic convertible that someone you know had around for that day.

A Lincoln Navigator is a lofty ride. A large SUV with the glamour that has framed 100 years of Ford's luxury brand wrapped in this 210-inch-long package. It is a 5,800-pound mass of elegance that speaks to whomever is riding in the second row of seats. The commanding presence reminds one of the progressions of one of Lincoln's icons from its century-long history – the 1961-64 Continental. Maybe, the neo-classical Lincoln and Continental Marks of the late 1950s? Or, the Lincolns that made the 1970s its most bourgeois period by never yielding to an oil crisis to maintain its status among American automakers.

Some may think a Lincoln Navigator would be a bit of an overkill for your wedding day. Rather, your honeymoon or a romantic time together locally or somewhere else.

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The second row Captain's Chairs are swathed in Black Onyx leather, adorned with Brandy stitching. Each seat is heated and cooled with a massage feature. This is part of what Lincoln calls the Invitation theme – one of four themes available in the top-of-the-line Navigator Black Label.

Between the both of you is a large center console. While it offers a huge storage area, there is a small touchscreen that controls the climate, your seats, your audio selection, and many more functions. You might want to be careful with the soundtrack you choose, as it will be emitted through 28 speakers powered by a Revel Ultima 3D audio system.

The indulgent couple is surrounded by materials and details that make this Navigator Black Label a special place for a special moment. The Venetian leather has Pergole micro-perforations in it. You have Dinamica sueded cloth above you and below you. Not to mention the laser-etched Khaya trimmings that make you feel right at home on the road. You are indeed indulging in some of the finest things one could imagine being surrounded with.

If you must bring your closest members of the wedding party – or, some hangers-on for another date – there is a third row of seats for them. They can only seat three, but actually two, if we're being realistic.

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All you care about is how comfortable the ride quality is. After all, a bad drive will ruin your day. With that said, it has a very smooth ride that never transmits bad roads into the cabin. Everyone is isolated from the world, as you sit back in those second row Captain's Chairs and celebrate your special day.

There may be an occasion when you might see the driver take their hands off the wheel. They are utilizing ActiveGlide, which is part of the Navigator's Lincoln CoPilot 2.0 Drive system. On top of a list of advanced driver assistance features, ActiveGlide is a hands-free system that is only available on limited stretches of divided highways across the U.S.A. The driver will get an indicator on the instrument cluster to let them know they are entering a zone where they can use ActiveGlide.

A word of caution: Use ActiveGlide sparingly and only if you know how the system truly works. And let the driver know to keep their hands on the wheel.

If you're considering one for yourself, a Lincoln Navigator is quite a substantial vehicle offering yards of opulence and luxury. These large SUVs start from $77,635. Our Black Label example came with a sticker price of $107,050. Most of its competitors are priced in this range – and beyond.

You can choose any such vehicle to make a statement on your wedding day. However, you will find that all of this opulence and indulgence should make your special day truly special. As the stretched Town Car limousine has vanished into automotive history, Lincoln would rather get you at the altar on time with commanding presence while making a statement about your love and devotion to that special person in your life.

Next time, ask your wedding planner for a Lincoln Navigator. Or, hire one for a chauffeured-driven experience. ▮

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Scott Jensen with LCR of Minnesota, the state's largest LGBTQ Republican group. The organization has endorsed Scott Jensen, the first endorsement of a statewide candidate in the group's history.

AS GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA, SCOTT JENSEN WILL:

- Utilize the skills and talents of **ALL Minnesotans** in his administration
- **Support** Equality
- Stiffen penalties for repeat, violent offenders; enact restorative justice plans and appoint judges who are **tough on crime**
- Create policies to **fight inflation** and allow more money in your pocket

DR. SCOTT JENSEN FOR GOVERNOR

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